

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 002372

FOL RPT TEHRAN 00110 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO ANKARA, ISLAMABAD,
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QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 00110

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CENTO, TU, IR, US

SUBJ: TURKISH AMBASSADOR'S CONCERNS RE U.S. "DOWNGRADING
OF CENTO"

1. ON JANUARY 1, AFTER DEPARTURE OF PRESIDENT CARTER, TURKISH
AMBASSADOR GUMRUKCUOGLU APPROACHED ME AND SAID HE WOULD LIKE
OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS PRESIDENT'S VISIT HERE. ACCORDINGLY,
I MET WITH HIM MORNING JANUARY 3 AND GAVE HIM GENERALIZED
BRIEFING ON RESULTS OF MEETINGS BETWEEN PRESIDENT AND SHAH.

2. IT DEVELOPED, HOWEVER, THAT GUMRUKCUOGLU WAS ONLY marginally
INTERESTED IN THOSE DISCUSSIONS. BURDEN OF HIS CONCERN WAS
IMPRESSION THAT UNITED STATES, BY STRESSING ITS SPECIAL
RELATIONSHIPS WITH IRAN, WAS DOWNGRADING CENTO AND, MORE
PARTICULARLY, ITS PRESENT AND FUTURE RELATIONSHIPS WITH TURKEY.
HE STRESSED THAT PRESIDENT'S CHARACTERIZATION OF IRAN
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 002372

AS AN "ISLAND" OF STABILITY OF PROGRESS SUGGESTED THE
CONCLUSION THAT ALL OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION--
INCLUDING TURKEY--WERE IN A STATE OF HOPELESS TURMOIL.

3. HIS CONCERNS IN THIS MATTER WERE MAGNIFIED BY AN
EDITORIAL APPEARING IN JANUARY 3 EDITION OF FRENCH-LANGUAGE
JOURNAL DE TEHRAN WHICH STATED, "TO CITE ONLY THIS REGION,

IRAN REMAINS THE ONLY COUNTRY ON WHICH THE UNITED STATES CAN COUNT TO SAFEGUARD THE PEACE, THIS THIS CONTEXT, ONE CAN THINK OF THE CENTO PACT AND OF THE OTHER TWO MEMBERS IN THE GRIP OF THE MOST SEVERE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEFFI-CULT IES." GUMRUKCOGLU SAID HE ASSUMED THE WRITER OF THAT EDITORIAL HAD RECEIVED SOME OFFICIAL GUIDANCE.

4. I TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT I FELT THE EDITORIAL WAS CONSIDRABLY MORE EXPANSIVE THAN THE SENSE OF THE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE CHIEFS OF STATE AND THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO RPT NO DEROGATION FROM CENTO AND CERTAINLY NO RPT NO LIGHT DIS-MISSAL OF TURKEY AS THE JOURNAL SUGGESTS. I TOLD HIM THAT, IN FACT, DURING THE EARLIER DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE SHAH IN WASHINGTON, THERE HAD BEEN AN EXCHANGE IN WHICH BOTH HAD STRESSED THE KEY IMPORTANCE OF TURKEY AND THE NEED TO RESTORE U.S.-TURKISH RELATIONS TO THEIR PROPER LEVEL.

5. AS FOR THE PRESIDENT'S USE OF THE WORD "ISLAND", THAT DID NOT SUGGEST A SURROUNDING SEA OF CHAOS. IN FACT, I THOUGHT WE COULD CONSTRUCT A CONCEPT OF OTHER SUCH "ISLANDS", TO INCLUDE TURKEY, AND FOR THAT MATTER, GREECE, IN AN "ARCHIPELAGO" WHICH WE WOULD HOPE IN THE FUTURE TO SEE DEVELOP INTO A "PENINSULA". HAVING MILKED THAT LITERARY ALLUSION FOR MORE THAN IT WAS WORTH, I THEN TURNED TO THE SITUATION IN TURKEY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CYPRUS AND NATO.
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PAGE 03 STATE 002372

6. GUMRUKCUOGLU WARMED TO THAT SUBJECT AND GAVE ME A MOST OPTIMISTIC FORECAST FOR THE NEW TURKISH GOVERNMENT, CLAIMING THAT ECEVIT WOULD BE FAR MORE ABLE THAN DEMIREL TO LAUNCH A NEGOTIATION WITH CARAMANLIS ON CYPRUS AND OTHERWISE FORETELLING GREAT PROGRESS FOR US-TURKISH RELATIONS.

7. IN CONCLUDING OUR CONVERSATION, I ASSURED GUMRUKCUOGLU THAT I WOULD REPORT HIS CONCERNS TO WASHINGTON, WHERE I FELT SURE THEY WOULD BE UNDERSTOOD. SULLIVAN UNQUOTE
CHRISTOPHER

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